Dear [Name],

It was so great working with you this year. I had a lot of fun this year. I'm always looking forward to seeing you next year. I enjoyed being on your wheel.

Love,
[Signature]

Lynda
CREE CALL
for louis

Lisa Shirley

He calls the red sun
from bad lands baked dry
by years without rain.

His tongue, thirst-stiffened, clings
in his throat like a desert
rat. Within his body
thin strips of blood pulse
heat.

And he sees, past the bright
clouds, past his hunger so deep
it burns

burning rock
the shadows

of birds twisting
black
against morning.
IN SLEEP

Karen Baum

Beneath my ear
a thousand small birds
sigh. Waves
drift like feathers over the sand.
Above the reeds, gulls rise,
circle the sleeping moon,
their wings slowly beating as a man
walks by the water. His face, pale
like clouds at evening, looks up
through the dark. He listens
for the birds that dive
each night into the sea, waits for the stars
to fade before he swims away
from the shore.
FOG

Tina Ament

Late at night fog
seeps through cracks
of memory, drowning
all sound.

I hear only the waves
that crash inside me
over seawalls of bone.

They are the breakers that steered
boats in December storms, spit spray
up to the windows
of the lighthouse.

As swells recede, they tug
at my mind like an anchor.
Fog surrounds my skin. I feel
its wet touch on my face.
Somewhere stars swim
dimmed by gray.

Light gone, I thrash
avoiding rocks, finally sinking
through breathes of sea.
I twist
but the water will not move in my wake.

MORNING

Judi Shulevitz

You wake
and reach for me
your hands touching
my wrist
no one has followed
the path of my blood
this way

The sun sliding over the window-
sill warms the room
leaves tremble water
onto the glass

Your fingers swim
about my waist. I
almost fear these currents
careening around rocks, white
water. I watch
the windows disappear
into light.
PRETENDING TO ICE FISH

Cindy Hecht

Each morning, he sits in fog
listening to the stillness
on the frozen lake. Outside
his tin shanty he sits
watching morning
open the sky
of grey. His eyes
follow his wife's path of light
into the kitchen. Yesterday
he told her the fish weren't biting.
Today, he will tell her he had one
a big one, but it got away.

RETURNING

Jim Tolley

The last I was here, snow melted into the ground
and grey mist clung to hills where leaves waited
to unfurl. In your woods, tapped maples
dripped sap that froze to sweet ice those last cold nights.
Two miles from your house, Pratt's Falls
ran white with spring runoff.

This morning, water edged over the falls and spilled
to mossy rocks at the bottom. Sumac blazed red
beneath yellowing aspen as I walked
the road through newly hayed fields, the dry ditches
on each side waiting for the wind
to fill them with frosted leaves.

And I saw you a mile away, riding the red John Deere
between bales on a new-mown slope.
I jumped the barbed-wire fence at a post tilted low,
crossed the field of cut stalks, and paused.
Over the noise of that old engine I called your name.

Now, at dusk, we ride past the white bee boxes
to the acres of goldenrod out back; the tractor lugs kick
insects into the air. From the high curved fender
I trace the course of a stream down to the edge
of the darkening woods, and wonder
at the high red clouds passing quickly
above us. Following the old stone fence north,
the last dust of Autumn is in our eyes; the goldenrod
stands bright around us as we ride the tractor
up the hill, to the house.
HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE

Diana Yates

I exhale the blue smoke and the haze becomes a cow.
I climb on her back and ride to the moon, to the music of a single violin (my cat's first chair).
The cow and I are hungry—we eat caviar from tupperware bowls with wooden spoons but before we finish the dishes run away. the music stops and my neighbor's chow chow chases my cat to the sun, as he runs the dog giggles.

"WHY NOT?"

Lisa Tennyson

Everyone called him Eddie Bleddy because he was a hemophiliac. But the thing that most people didn't know about Eddie was that he was a hemophiliac with suicidal tendencies. When Eddie was in first grade he got up to sharpen his pencil (quite often, as a matter of fact), and once someone stuck a thumbtack on his chair. When Eddie came to sit down the girl who sat behind him, (she felt sorry for Eddie), pointed and said, "Look, Eddie! Don't sit on that Thumbtack!"

But Eddie shouted "Why not?" as he hopped into his chair. He didn't want the teacher to yell at him for being out of his seat. As Eddie felt the thumbtack puncture his skin, he smiled in delight. The girl behind him gave a gasp of horror, but Eddie motioned for her to keep quiet. Soon, however, a pool of blood began to gather beneath Eddie's butt. The teacher, who was in the middle of demonstrating the sexual impossibility of an apples plus oranges problem (she was a spinster whose affairs one could not even count with the aid of ten fingers and ten toes), finally saw the blood, did a double take and sent her chalk screeching across the board, which was appropriate, for she was at a complete loss for words. But someone shouted, "Eddie Bleddy! Icky reddy! He's gonna' be deady!"

Eddie was rushed to the hospital, but he was the only known hemophiliac in his small Nebraska town, and the hospital did not have sufficient facilities to deal with his condition. They did the best they could, though, and sealed a Ziploc Storage Bag around his right buttock so that it would not leak. That was Eddie's first brush with death.

When he was thirteen Eddie first began to "really notice" girls. His parents encouraged him to date, since they thought maybe it would help him to "grow up" a little. So Eddie asked his parents if he could have a girl that he kind of liked over for dinner. They said, "Why sure, Eddie."
On the chosen day his mother cooked up a batch of spaghetti and meat sauce, Eddie's favorite meal. It was an enjoyable dinner during which Eddie's parents asked the girl how she liked school. Eddie's father was the first to excuse himself from the table and he called Eddie into the living room. He took him aside and said, "Eddie, she's a very nice girl, but I don't think you should see her anymore."

"Why not?" Eddie demanded.

"Well Eddie, she has braces! And my God, did you see those fingernails? Eddie, your Mother and I are concerned for your safety!"

Eddie ran out of the room, grabbed the girl, who was just peeling her garlic bread away from the crust, pulled her up the stairs to his room, and slammed the door. His parents threw up their arms in exasperation. They could not convince Eddie of the dangers of getting involved with a girl like that.

The next morning Eddie awoke, cold and shivering. "Hell must have frozen over," he thought. Much to his surprise, he discovered that he was in jail. There were strips of light streaming across his face from the barred windows. Eddie tried to speak, but his mouth hurt terribly. Fresh scabs covered his face, neck, arms, and back. Some of them were bandaged with old underwear that Eddie's Mother had cut up for rags. Eddie tried to get up but he was too weak. Just then someone called, "Hey Chief, the kid's awake."

"Okay, Magrane," the chief answered. Eddie could hear him sauntering down the hall towards his cell.

The Chief stood and glared at Eddie for a few minutes, but Eddie could barely move. "Say kid, that sure musta' been some helluva' fight you got yourself into! The Chief laughed at his own remark.

Eddie didn't answer. He looked at the ceiling.

"Your parents tell me that you tried to commit suicide. Is that true?"

Eddie nodded. A drop of blood ran down his chin.
think of me?

"I don't think they serve sodas here, son."

"He's not your son!" said Mom, omg omg omg omg.

"Behave yourself, Ming," snapped Mother. Franz, Lisa and Ming finally agreed to split Chateau-Briande, since neither Ming nor Lisa was very hungry.

Just after the main course arrived Mother said, "Have you heard from Pamela or David recently?" "No," said Ming flatly. "Do you miss Andover?" Daddy asked. "No," said Ming flatly. Ming hated Andover, but she really was sorry that Pam and Prince didn't write. Franz began to speak to Lisa in Pig Latin.

"You seem to like it a lot better at Dauphin now," Daddy commented. Ming knew he was hoping she would start talking about school, and so she replied, "Yes." She picked up her water glass and took a drink from it, the brass bracelet on her left wrist clinking musically against the crystal.

"It's a shame you have to wear those awful bracelets," said Mother, straining to be heard over Franz and Lisa's conversation. "I don't know why they can't have you carry I.D. cards or something. It makes it so obvious that..." Mother stopped her speech. Sixteen going on five and a half. Jesus. Ming remembered how Mother hated to admit that there was something wrong.

Franz and Lisa's conversation was growing louder. Ming concentrated on their words for a moment, to discover the topic, then joined in. "Children," exclaimed Mother, "you are just too loud." Franz and Lisa immediately stopped talking, but Ming was right on, glancing sideways at Mother and Daddy every few minutes. She slowly increased the pitch of her voice until she was almost screaming. Mother took her by the arm and led her to the bathroom. She slowly quieted and began to swear softly, still speaking in Pig Latin. Mother didn't say anything, only sighed and patted her on the back. Ming was grateful for the silence, and stopped swearing. She stared at Mother, who was breathing deeply—obviously upset. The topaz on her right index finger was trembling. Yes, Lisa my Mother is very pretty. I know she'll like you. "Do you like Lisa and Franz, Mother?"

"They say it's the second time."

Eddie nodded again.

"Well kid, as soon as you get a little bit stronger we're gonna turn you over to juvenile court. They'll probably just send you home. But the next time something like this happens you'll be arrested and booked for attempted suicide. That's a serious offense, you know. You're lucky your parents turned you in."

Eddie laughed. He couldn't believe they had done it. Hell, it was only suicide. And shit! He'd only tried it twice! And besides that, the girl was in on it too, and his parents didn't turn her in. He would probably never see her again; such a nice girl.

His parents tried everything from extra late television hours to the family minister to get Eddie to shape up, but it was all to no avail. They decided that Eddie was destined to spend the rest of his high school years in reform school. But during his first year away they missed him so much that the following summer they decided to take him to a "special doctor" who would try to straighten things out. They brought him into the waiting room kicking and screaming. This had happened to some of his friends at school, but he knew there was nothing wrong with his head.

After ten minutes with Eddie, the doctor could see that he would get nothing out of him, so he told Eddie what he thought. "Eddie, I'd be surprised if you make it past the age of thirty in your shape, with the world so full of sharp objects. How do you manage to open a can of spaghetti?"

"My mother makes me practice," answered Eddie. The thought of kicking the bucket by age thirty had perked him up a bit. But Doctor Von Derwant was pretty fed up with this smart alec kid not responding correctly so he said, "Look Eddie, I've got to cut this one short for a golf game with Doctor Hoener, next door. How about if I see you next week?"
"Maybe yes, maybe no." Eddie would have to see what his mother had to say.

"Well, whatever," said Von Derwant, cramming his putter into a golf bag.

As Eddie and his parents threaded their way through the parking lot back to the car his mother asked him if the doctor was nice. "He's great!" said Eddie, "he even let me out early. See I told you I was okay!"

Doctor Von Derwant checked his rearview mirror, making sure the path was clear to back out his lime green Cadillac Seville from it's designated parking space, and there was Eddie, stooping to pick up a worm. Actually he was thinking about that magic number. He had to admit that thirty was a long way off, but who knew what could happen between now and then? Doctor Von Derwant turned around, to be sure that the image he saw in his mirror was correct; then he turned to his golf partner and grinned. "Should I hit him?"

"Why not?" said Doctor Hoener, in the casual way that psychiatrists joke among themselves.

Von Derwant floored his Cadillac. "The boy is suicidal; I'm gonna help him overcome it!" he thought.

Eddie, hearing the screeching tires, looked up to see a big black license plate with orange letters S-H-R-I-N-K, coming straight for him. His mother screamed, "Edieeeeee~" and tried to pull him out of the way of the car, but his feet remained glued to the cement. Eddie raised his head and clenched his fists, preparing for the impact. "This is it~" he thought.

SPLOOEY! It was all over in two seconds. Eddie was emblazoned across the left taillight and bumper of Von Derwant's green Seville. Red and green. It reminded Von Derwant of Christmas. Red and green. It reminded Von Derwant of Christmas.

It was clearly an accident. Von Derwant claimed that he couldn't see the boy, and by the time he did it was too late. His golfing partner, Hoener, was a bit confused about the whole thing, so he kept his mouth shut. No charges were pressed, and Von Derwant sent flowers.

wanted wanted desperately to say something to him, and agonized over several different topics, deciding at last on the I Ching. She turned to him and began to explain why it fascinated her. Daddy looked at her, attempting polite interest, but when the waiter appeared with menus and wine list the conversation quickly ended. Ming looked across the table at Franz. He looked unhappy and was pulling nervously at his brass bracelet. She kicked him under the table. Franz looked up at her and smiled, then kicked her back. Ming kicked him again; he kicked her again. Lisa raised an eyebrow questioningly at Ming. Ming kicked Lisa with her other foot. Lisa kicked her back, then kicked Franz. Very quickly they were all laughing. Mother stared at the ceiling with a martyred look. Franz saw it and stopped kicking with a guilty downward glance. Franz and Lisa stopped kicking, too, and the tension of the dinner returned.

"What have you been doing in school?" asked Daddy. Ming knew that he was trying to give them a graceful way to retain their dignity, but she knew that none of them had any dignity. Franz and Lisa looked to Ming, expecting her to answer her parents' question. "Well," she started, "there was a cat in Franz' bathroom again today." "Yes," agreed Franz, nodding.

"And you met a hunchback! Remember?" Lisa put in quickly, adding, "I've never seen a hunchback."

"What a shame," said Mother, "perhaps you'll meet one in the near future."

Ming was suddenly angry. She stared for a moment at the huge topaz on Mother's finger, then stood up and said rather loudly, "What would you kids like to eat?" "What's wrong with wanting to see a hunchback?" Daddy put his hand on her shoulder and applied pressure intended to bring her back to her seat. Ming resisted for a moment then sat down hard. Several people were craning their necks to see what was going on at Ming's table. Lisa looked embarrassed but proud, and Franz smiled and laughed loudly.

"No one said anything was wrong with wanting to see a hunchback," said Daddy soothingly. "What would you kids like to eat?" Ming said she wasn't hungry. "What about you Lisa?" Lisa looked at Ming and stuttered, "I'm not h-h-hungry either." Daddy pursed his lips and asked, "What about you Franz?" "I'll have a butterscotch soda," said Franz decisively. Daddy looked down at the menu; Ming supposed he was hiding a smile. Is Franz so funny? What does he
"But there's a cat in my bathroom."

"There is not a cat in your bathroom, Franz," said Gina in a tired voice.

"There is so!" Franz slammed the door shut.

"I'm going to go and get rid of that cat, Franz. From now on you'll use your own bathroom." Franz didn't say anything. Gina left. Ming opened the I Ching and continued reading.

Franz was singing "This Land Is Your Land," at the top of his lungs. Ming joined in.

Nobody said anything on the way into the city. Ming stared out the car window wondering how fast the earth was spinning. She couldn't remember whether things stayed on because it revolved so slowly or whether more rapid whirling kept them...

"I suppose you don't get off campus very often," said Mother as soon as they were seated in the restaurant. Franz and Lisa looked nervously at Ming. Ming wished she had a hankie to tie between her mother's teeth. Mother why can't you say something important?

"Where do you want to go to college, dear?" Mother asked, leerling politely at Lisa. Lisa looked at Mother with wide eyes. Ming hoped Mother would fall into Lisa's eyes and disappear, and for a moment Mother tottered, smiling uncomfortably, but she caught her balance and turned to Franz saying, "Ming tells me you paint." Franz nodded and began to stir the ice in his water glass with his finger. Mother waited for a moment; Ming knew she was waiting for Franz to pick up the conversation. She also knew that Franz would never pick up the conversation. Mother simpered at Franz and said, "I paint too." Franz smiled tensely at Mother and drew his finger from the glass, wiping it dry on a napkin.

Ming stared at her father. He was handsome--looked almost dashing in his perfectly cut navy blazer and perfectly pressed oxford cloth shirt. Daddy's shirts never wrinkled. His thick curly hair was parted neatly and laid to the right side of his head, and his horn-rimmed glasses were slipping, ever so slightly, down his nose, making him look almost human. Ming

At the funeral, the minister, having had some talks with Eddie, said, "Eddie, rest his soul, if he were alive today, would have wanted it this way." Eddie's mother started sobbing uncontrollably.

Von Derwant had only to take his car through the Kwik Kleen Car Wash once in order to remove all the stains from his back fender. He was pleasantly surprised, but then he remembered that this was due to the fact that Eddie had thin blood. Von Derwant took out his monogrammed handkerchief and wiped the last few drops of water that the drying boys had missed from his taillight. "I sure was right about sharp objects," he thought to himself, as he climbed into his clean green "SHRINK" machine.
The coins clattered noisily on the thickly varnished plank floor. "Yin, yang, yin," said Ming mechanically. Lisa carefully placed a yin mark at the top of the hexagram. "I knew it," she said, "Thunder in the earth---return! Why else would your parents come?" "Let me see the book," said Ming, "that's not all it means." Ming opened the I Ching to hexagram 24 and began to read.

"What are your parents like?" asked Lisa anxiously, "What should I wear? Do you think they'll like me? Is your mother pretty?" Ming shut the book, with a slam and began to laugh. Her laugh sounded like a draft of wind, and Lisa's nervous giggle was lost in it. Ming reached out and ran her fingers through Lisa's hair, saying, "You're as silly as Franz."

Someone knocked at the door. "Come in!" called Ming. It was Franz. "May I use your bathroom?" he asked, "There's a cat in mine." "Sure," said Ming, "Did you tell Gina about it?"

"No, I think it will probably go away. Does this tie look O.K. with this suit?"

"Do you have one with more green in it?"

"Yeah, but I think I left it in the bathroom."

"Well," said Ming, "It's close enough. My father's color-blind anyway."

Franz stepped into the bathroom, and Lisa stood up and stretched. "I think I'm going to go and change," she said, walking out of Ming's room into the hall. "I'll be down in a little bit."

"Ming!" It was Gina. Franz was going to be in trouble. "Ming," asked Gina as she walked into the room, "Is Franz in here?" Ming considered lying, knowing Gina wouldn't press her for the truth, but decided instead to point silently at the bathroom door. Gina knocked authoritatively. "Franz?" she asked. The door opened and Franz peeked out. "Franz, you know you're supposed to stay downstairs with the other boys."
The van pulled into an alley and stopped. As quickly as the door opened a hunchback woman came flying up the stairs. A voice behind her drawled, "She's going back to the State Hospital." The hunchback shuffled down the aisle, obviously heading for the very back of the van, but the driver threw the bus into gear and she fell into the seat across from the woman. Thwarted, the hunchback resolutely turned her back on the woman and stared out the window. Undaunted, the woman turned to the hunchback and cheerfully said, "Isn't it a nice sunny day out?" The hunchback turned completely around and stared at the woman, then grunted and turned back to the window. There was an uncomfortable silence. Ming took the paper and pencil stub from her back pocket and began to write.

"What are you doing?" the woman quickly asked. Ming knew the woman was hoping to break the silence and replied, "I'm writing a story." She hoped the woman would ask her questions about the story.

"What is it about?" asked the woman.

Ming's eyes widened and she said, "It's about some hunters killing a unicorn with a crossbow. The unicorn's going to gore 'em with his horn, and then die of grief over his guilt."

"That sounds very nice," said the woman smiling and nodding. The woman was humming her, Ming realized. She shoved the paper and pencil back into her pocket and decided she hated the woman. After several minutes she said, "No it isn't." The woman looked confusedly at her, and asked, "Isn't what?"

"It isn't a nice story. It's an awful story. The unicorn dies." Ming spat the word at the woman, then walked carefully to the front of the van, steadying herself against its motion. The driver pulled the van to the side of the road and Ming got out and walked back to Dauphin.

As she neared the campus she cut through the woods and emerged in the gardens. Joel was sitting on a cement bench examining someone's file. As he heard her footsteps he looked up and smiled, saying, "Ah, Ming, I've been looking all over for you. Your parents are here." Ming fell to a sitting position on the lawn and almost started to cry. She had forgotten that her parents existed.

CHARACTER SKETCH
James Wilson
the cup, overflowing, standing empty.
fall.
*
*
*
Nigger.
I could feel the silent, hot whisper as soon as she walked into the store.

The three of us watched her glance hesitantly at us. We watched her push the door closed with an open palm. Her loose, flower-patterned dress did not move, yet she quickly bent and fluffed it about her knees, as though trying to hide the baggy hose and hard, heavy black shoes.

She turned and started to study the items on the close-packed shelves; yet I could still feel her wide eyes watching us, afraid.

As the woman shuffled in front of the sugars, Harris said, mock pleasantly, "May I help you, Miss?" She turned. "You got credit?" Her voice retreated from the words.

"I'm sorry, we don't." Harris lied. His smile faded as she turned away from us.

Harris stepped back and leaned against the counter with us. It seemed like an hour past death when the woman reached for a can of evaporated milk, then faced us.

"For the chillen. Treat," she said, and dropped her eyes.

Harris walked around to the back of the counter. "That'll be thirteen cents, plus tax."
The woman produced a tiny, worn silk purse from the side of her dress. She set the can down on the counter and held the purse in front of her face. Slowly, gently, she pulled out one coin at a time, laid them on the counter.

"Two nickles, three pennies," Harris said, and popped open the register with three turns of its handle.

"Thanyou," the woman said.

"Thank you," Harris said.

Tucking the change purse somewhere, she grabbed the can of milk and held it in both hands, like an offering to a god, and walked slowly to the door. Shifting the can to her left hand, she turned the great brass knob on the door and pulled it to her.

The little Chinese bell tinkled as the door shut, and through the window I could see her step onto the street, grasping the can.

"Nigger," one of us said.

"Aren't these buses nice?" asked the woman. Her smile was like a crater left behind an atomic blast. Ming shrank back involuntarily, and nodded her head.

"George and I have a van--a little smaller than this--with an elevator and a ramp. It's really nice, but you know how the price of gas is--it's just terrible. We've never tried this DIAL-A-RIDE before, so today I said, 'George let's try that DIAL-A-RIDE, it's only twenty-five cents apiece' and well, here we are! It's nice, isn't it George?" George looked over at her and gurgled. Ming, who suspected that the woman was lying to impress her, turned and smiled at George, feeling he had made an appropriate reply.

"Oh my dear," the woman started nervously, "are you from Dauphin?" Ming pulled her "inscrutable" mask and stared into the woman's eyes as if to ask 'whatever do you mean?', until she noticed the direction of the woman's gaze. Her eyes were focused on the heavy brass bracelet that fit closely to Ming's left wrist. Ming quickly pulled the monogrammed cuff of her shirt down over the bracelet's noon-time glint. She hated the way it trapped the sun. She remembered a night, earlier in the year, when Franz had quietly removed his bracelet with a file he bought in town. He had worn a long sleeved sweater to breakfast the next morning and sat as far away from Dr. Renesantz as he could. Ming remembered that breakfast well; it was the last morning she called Joel "Dr. Renesantz". As they filed out of the dining room, Joel had grabbed Franz' empty wrist and asked him if he was no longer a member of the community. Franz had burst into tears and fallen into Joel's arms, and Ming was sure there were tears in Joel's eyes, though he wrapped Franz' wrist in velvet as resolutely as ever, and resoldered the brass bracelet.

"Yes, I am from Dauphin," Ming said suddenly, daring the woman to look down upon her school. The woman smiled and said with genuine kindness, "A girl named Lisa came to sing at the hospital last week. She had a beautiful voice." Lisa was Ming's closest friend, except for maybe Franz. Lisa sang at the State Hospital once a week; Joel thought it was good for her. "She's my best friend," said Ming, smiling at the woman as if she were Lisa. The woman smiled back at her, and Ming suddenly hoped that George had not been sick for long; she hated to think of this woman living with such an awful cripple. Ming hated cripples.
"That's great," enthused Ming, "I can walk the rest of the way." "Fine," said the voice, "you shouldn't have a very long wait." The voice hung up the phone without saying good-bye, infuriating Ming, who threw the receiver violently at its cradle. Her hand tightened into a fist which struck the plexiglass at the side of the booth and bounced back like a rubber ball. She stomped out of the booth and sat down on the curb, taking a folded piece of paper and a pencil stub from the back pocket of her jeans. She leaned the paper on her knee and began to write, the muscles in her face slowly relaxing.

After several minutes a small blue and green van drove up and stopped. It had the words DIAL-A-RIDE emblazoned in foot-high black letters along the side nearest Ming. A door opened on this side, and she walked toward it.

"Ya goin' to Little Hickham?" drawled the driver. "Why, yes, I am," said Ming, mimicking his accent. Ming hated Kentucky bus-drivers. "Drop it there," said the driver, indicating a coin box at his side. Ming imagined he was a poor genius working his way through the University of Kentucky with a skinny wife and a two-month-old baby, but then she looked at his sideburns and decided she still hated Kentucky bus-drivers. She dropped two quarters into the top of the coin box and watched them disappear.

The seats and walls of the van were covered with black vinyl, and there were two passengers: a woman with fading blue rinsed hair, and a man strapped into a silver wheelchair. The man who had been staring intently at the fifth button of his shirt, turned his face up toward Ming and moved his lips, but no sound came out. The seating arrangement of the van gave Ming the difficult choice of sitting next to the old man or insulting the couple by moving to the back of the bus. The driver gunned the accelerator, and Ming sat down heavily, almost falling into the lap of the man in the silver wheelchair. She pulled the pencil stub from her back pocket and imagined what would happen if she jabbed it into the old man's flabby chest. It was terrible that he should live that way. She turned the pencil stub around in her hand, gripped it, poised her wrist for the jab, then stuffed it back into her pocket, leaned her head on the window and decided to wait for either the man or the woman to make conversation.

AFTERNOON OF A FAWN

Lynda Field

I've seen deer before, being dragged through meadows, roped to car hoods and driven across town. During fall I walk in the woods. Watch their bellies slit, forelegs to anus, guts left behind on hard, cold ground.

Today, I saw a fawn collapse in the brush, white chest damp with red.

The hunter, standing near, calls to his dog who gnaws on a leg, the fawn still breathing. Blood gathers in the valley.

Another shot resounds. A carcass with a bullet in it's eye. The hunter's dog laps warm blood streaming, as if to quench a thirst inside. I turn away and start home.
BOAT POEM #5: TO MY HALF-BROTHER
Nick Thorndike

In New York City, you tried to visit an old friend
who lived upstairs,
but you were lost in the elevator
for two hours; thinking of the lake
at home. When you dropped twenty stories,
you heard the distant gulls
that settle on the lake's surface
and brim with the whitecaps at dusk.

At dusk, walking to Central Park,
you remembered the western sky in Michigan,
and staring towards Radio City Music Hall,
you recalled, at your house, the sun closing
behind a line of spruce trees. But here,
heading to the piers, you knew
that no one could follow you there.

Watching the passenger ships load,
you stepped over the long fishing nets
that were crumpled on the dock
like an old man, and you laughed
at the coming night,
breathing on the buildings.

BRASS BRACELETS
Elise M. Breen

I. DIAL-A-RIDE

When she got to Findel Street Ming stopped running because she realized that she had missed the bus. It was the third time in two weeks, and she knew that if she called school for a ride she wouldn't be allowed to come into the city again for a long time. She walked to the corner, swaring between gasps, as her heart slowed to its normal rate. At the corner were two plexiglass phone-boots with great directories chained to their sides, and a tiny maple tree planted between them. Ming hated this small tree. The phone-boots had stunted the growth of the tree's lower limbs, giving it the shape of a thistle, and Ming wondered if the corporation that placed the phone-boots might return and paint its leaves purple for publicity. Come see the thistle-tree! Yucc. She stood a little distance from the phone-boots and considered the tree's suffering, resolving to return some evening, with a shovel, and uproot it.

Ming had little difficulty deciding which booth to use, the one nearest the street being occupied by a local farmer and three overflowing grocery bags. She pulled the door shut and dropped some coins into the phone. Sighing, she began to dial the school's number, rehearsing what she would say to Joel when he answered. She leaned against the side of the phone-booth and tried to stare into space. A small sign obstructed her view. It read: Need a ride? Call 288-3030. DIAL-A-RIDE. She quickly dropped the receiver into its cradle, and her coins tumbled into the return. Reading the number off the side of the booth, she slowly dialed it and waited for an answer. It rang twelve or thirteen times before a deep voice asked, "Location?" Ming glanced out the window and replied, "9th and Butler." "Destination?" the voice asked. "Dauphin." "Dauphin?" the voice asked. "Yes, Dauphin School." "Oh," said the voice knowingly, "DIAL-A-RIDE doesn't go out there. We do have one bus that goes as far as Little Hickham, however."
BOAT POEM #5: TO MY HALF-BROTHER

Nick Thorndike

In New York City,
you tried to visit an old friend
who lived upstairs,
but you were lost in the elevator
for two hours; thinking of the lake
at home. When you dropped twenty stories,
you heard the distant gulls
that settle on the lake's surface
and brim with the whitecaps at dusk.

At dusk, walking to Central Park,
you remembered the western sky in Michigan,
and staring towards Radio City Music Hall,
you recalled, at your house, the sun closing
behind a line of spruce trees. But here,

heading to the piers, you knew
that no one could follow you there.

Watching the passenger ships load,
you stepped over the long fishing nets
that were crumpled on the dock
like an old man, and you laughed
at the coming night,
breathing on the buildings.

BRASS BRACELETS

Elise M. Breen

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doesn't go out there. We do have one bus that goes as far as Little
Hickham, however."
"That's great," enthused Ming, "I can walk the rest of the way." "Fine," said the voice, "you shouldn't have a very long wait." The voice hung up the phone without saying good-bye, infuriating Ming, who threw the receiver violently at its cradle. Her hand tightened into a fist which struck the plexiglass at the side of the booth and bounced back like a rubber ball. She stomped out of the booth and sat down on the curb, taking a folded piece of paper and a pencil stub from the back pocket of her jeans. She leaned the paper on her knee and began to write, the muscles in her face slowly relaxing.

After several minutes a small blue and green van drove up and stopped. It had the words DIAL-A-RIDE emblazoned in foot-high black letters along the side nearest Ming. A door opened on this side, and she walked toward it.

"Ya goin' to Little Hickham?" drawled the driver. "Why, yes, I am," said Ming, mimicking his accent. Ming hated Kentucky bus-drivers. "Drop it there," said the driver, indicating a coin box at his side. Ming imagined he was a poor genius working his way through the University of Kentucky with a skinny wife and a two-month-old baby, but then she looked at his sideburns and decided she still hated Kentucky bus-drivers. She dropped two quarters into the top of the coin box and watched them disappear.

The seats and walls of the van were covered with black vinyl, and there were two passengers: a woman with fading blue rinsed hair, and a man strapped into a silver wheelchair. The man who had been staring intently at the fifth button of his shirt, turned his face up toward Ming and moved his lips, but no sound came out. The seating arrangement of the van gave Ming the difficult choice of sitting next to the old man or insulting the couple by moving to the back of the bus. The driver gunned the accelerator, and Ming sat down heavily, almost falling into the lap of the man in the silver wheelchair. She pulled the pencil stub from her back pocket and imagined what would happen if she jabbed it into the old man's flabby chest. It was terrible that he should live that way. She turned the pencil stub around in her hand, gripped it, poised her wrist for the jab, then stuffed it back into her pocket, leaned her head on the window and decided to wait for either the man or the woman to make conversation.

AFTERNOON OF A FAWN
Lynda Field

I've seen deer before,
being dragged through meadows, roped
to car hoods and driven across town.
During fall I walk in the woods.
Watch their bellies slit,
Forelegs to anus, guts left
behind on hard, cold ground.

Today, I saw a fawn
collapse in the brush,
white chest damp
with red.

The hunter, standing near, calls
to his dog who gnaws
on a leg, the fawn
still breathing.
Blood gathers in the valley.

Another shot resounds. A carcass
with a bullet in it's eye.
The hunter's dog laps
warm blood streaming,
as if to quench a thirst
inside. I turn away
and start home.
The woman produced a tiny, worn silk purse from the side of her dress. She set the can down on the counter and held the purse in front of her face. Slowly, gently, she pulled out one coin at a time, laid them on the counter.

"Two nickles, three pennies," Harris said, and popped open the register with three turns of its handle.

"Thanyou," the woman said.

"Thank you," Harris said.

Tucking the change purse somewhere, she grabbed the can of milk and held it in both hands, like an offering to a god, and walked slowly to the door. Shifting the can to her left hand, she turned the great brass knob on the door and pulled it to her.

The little Chinese bell tinkled as the door shut, and through the window I could see her step onto the street, grasping the can.

"Nigger," one of us said.

"Aren't these buses nice?" asked the woman. Her smile was like a crater left behind an atomic blast. Ming shrank back involuntarily, and nodded her head.

"George and I have a van--a little smaller than this--with an elevator and a ramp. It's really nice, but you know how the price of gas is--it's just terrible. We've never tried this DIAL-A-RIDE before, so today I said, 'George let's try that DIAL-A-RIDE, it's only twenty-five cents apiece' and well, here we are! It's nice, isn't it George?" George looked over at her and gurgled. Ming, who suspected that the woman was lying to impress her, turned and smiled at George, feeling he had made an appropriate reply.

"Oh my dear," the woman started nervously, "are you from Dauphin?" Ming pulled her "inscrutable" mask and stared into the woman's eyes as if to ask 'whatever do you mean?', until she noticed the direction of the woman's gaze. Her eyes were focused on the heavy brass bracelet that fit closely to Ming's left wrist. Ming quickly pulled the monogrammed cuff of her shirt down over the bracelet's noon-time glint. She hated the way it trapped the sun. She remembered a night, earlier in the year, when Franz had quietly removed his bracelet with a file he bought in town. He had worn a long sleeved sweater to breakfast the next morning and sat as far away from Dr. Renesantz as he could. Ming remembered that breakfast well; it was the last morning she called Joel "Dr. Renesantz". As they filed out of the dining room, Joel had grabbed Franz' empty wrist and asked him if he was no longer a member of the community. Franz had burst into tears and fallen into Joel's arms, and Ming was sure there were tears in Joel's eyes, though he wrapped Franz' wrist in velvet as resolutely as ever, and resoldered the brass bracelet.

"Yes, I am from Dauphin," Ming said suddenly, daring the woman to look down upon her school. The woman smiled and said with genuine kindness, "A girl named Lisa came to sing at the hospital last week. She had a beautiful voice." Lisa was Ming's closest friend, except for maybe Franz. Lisa sang at the State Hospital once a week; Joel thought it was good for her. "She's my best friend," said Ming, smiling at the woman as if she were Lisa. The woman smiled back at her, and Ming suddenly hoped that George had not been sick for long; she hated to think of this woman living with such an awful cripple. Ming hated cripples.
James Wilson

CHARACTER SKETCH

the cup, overflowing, standing empty.

fall.

Nigger.

I could feel the silent, hot whisper as soon as she walked into the store.

The three of us watched her glance hesitantly at us. We watched her push the door closed with an open palm. Her loose, flower-patterned dress did not move, yet she quickly bent and fluffed it about her knees, as though trying to hide the baggy hose and hard, heavy black shoes.

As the woman shuffled in front of the sugars, Harris said, mock pleasantly, "May I help you, Miss?" She turned. "You got credit?" Her voice retreated from the words.

As the woman shuffled in front of the sugars, Harris said, "You got credit?" She turned.

"You got credit?" Her voice retreated from the words.

"I'm sorry, we don't." Harris lied. His smile faded as she turned away from us.

Harris stepped back and leaned against the counter with us.

"For the chillen. Treat," she said, and dropped her eyes.

Harris walked around to the back of the counter. "That'll be thirteen cents, plus tax."
The coins clattered noisily on the thickly varnished plank floor. "Yin, yang, yin," said Ming mechanically. Lisa carefully placed a yin mark at the top of the hexagram. "I knew it," she said, "Thunder in the earth---return: Why else would your parents come?" "Let me see the book," said Ming, "that's not all it means." Ming opened the I Ching to hexagram 24 and began to read.

"What are your parents like?" asked Lisa anxiously, "What should I wear? Do you think they'll like me? Is your mother pretty?" Ming shut the book, with a slam and began to laugh. Her laugh sounded like a draft of wind, and Lisa's nervous giggle was lost in it. Ming reached out and ran her fingers through Lisa's hair, saying, "You're as silly as Franz."

Someone knocked at the door. "Come in!" called Ming. It was Franz. "May I use your bathroom?" he asked, "There's a cat in mine." "Sure," said Ming, "Did you tell Gina about it?"

"No, I think it will probably go away. Does this tie look O.K. with this suit?"

"Do you have one with more green in it?"

"Yeah, but I think I left it in the bathroom."

"Well," said Ming, "It's close enough. My father's color-blind anyway."

Franz stepped into the bathroom, and Lisa stood up and stretched. "I think I'm going to go and change," she said, walking out of Ming's room into the hall. "I'll be down in a little bit."

"Ming!" It was Gina. Franz was going to be in trouble. "Ming," asked Gina as she walked into the room, "Is Franz in here?" Ming considered lying, knowing Gina wouldn't press her for the truth, but decided instead to point silently at the bathroom door. Gina knocked authoritatively. "Franz?" she asked. The door opened and Franz peeked out. "Franz, you know you're supposed to stay downstairs with the other boys."
"But there's a cat in my bathroom."

"There is not a cat in your bathroom, Franz," said Gina in a tired voice.

"There is so!" Franz slammed the door shut.

"I'm going to go and get rid of that cat, Franz. From now on you'll use your own bathroom." Franz didn't say anything. Gina left. Ming opened the I Ching and continued reading. Franz was singing "This Land Is Your Land," at the top of his lungs. Ming joined in.

Nobody said anything on the way into the city. Ming stared out the car window wondering how fast the earth was spinning. She couldn't remember whether things stayed on because it revolved so slowly or whether more rapid whirling kept them...

"I suppose you don't get off campus very often," said Mother as soon as they were seated in the restaurant. Franz and Lisa looked nervously at Ming. Ming wished she had a handkerchief to tie between her mother's teeth. Mother why can't you say something important?

"Where do you want to go to college, dear?" Mother asked, leering politely at Lisa. Lisa looked at Mother with wide eyes. Ming hoped Mother would fall into Lisa's eyes and disappear, and for a moment Mother tottered, smiling uncomfortably, but she caught her balance and turned to Franz saying, "Ming tells me you paint." Franz nodded and began to stir the ice in his water glass with his finger. Mother waited for a moment; Ming knew she was waiting for Franz to pick up the conversation. She also knew that Franz would never pick up the conversation. Mother simpered at Franz and said, "I paint too." Franz smiled tensely at Mother and drew his finger from the glass, wiping it dry on a napkin.

Ming stared at her father. He was handsome—looked almost dashing in his perfectly cut navy blazer and perfectly pressed oxford cloth shirt. Daddy's shirts never wrinkled. His thick curly hair was parted neatly and laid to the right side of his head, and his horn-rimmed glasses were slipping, ever so slightly, down his nose, making him look almost human. Ming

At the funeral, the minister, having had some talks with Eddie, said, "Eddie, rest his soul, if he were alive today, would have wanted it this way." Eddie's mother started sobbing uncontrollably.

Von Derwant had only to take his car through the Kwik Kleen Car Wash once in order to remove all the stains from his back fender. He was pleasantly surprised, but then he remembered that this was due to the fact that Eddie had thin blood. Von Derwant took out his monogrammed handkerchief and wiped the last few drops of water that the drying boys had missed from his taillight. "I sure was right about sharp objects," he thought to himself, as he climbed into his clean green "SHRINK" machine.
"Maybe yes, maybe no." Eddie would have to see what his mother had to say.

"Well, whatever," said Von Derwant, cramming his putter into a golf bag.

As Eddie and his parents threaded their way through the parking lot back to the car his mother asked him if the doctor was nice. "He's great!" said Eddie, "he even let me out early. See I told you I was okay!"

Doctor Von Derwant checked his rearview mirror, making sure the path was clear to back out his lime green Cadillac Seville from its designated parking space, and there was Eddie, stooping to pick up a worm. Actually he was thinking about that magic number. He had to admit that thirty was a long way off, but who knew what could happen between now and then? Doctor Von Derwant turned around, to be sure that the image he saw in his mirror was correct; then he turned to his golf partner and grinned. "Should I hit him?"

"Why not?" said Doctor Hoener, in the casual way that psychiatrists joke among themselves.

Von Derwant floor ed his Cadillac. "The boy is suicidal; I'm gonna help him overcome it!" he thought.

Eddie, hearing the screeching tires, looked up to see a big black license plate with orange letters S-H-R-I-N-K, coming straight for him. His mother screamed, "Edieeeeee!" and tried to pull him out of the way of the car, but his feet remained glued to the cement. Eddie raised his head and clenched his fists, preparing for the impact. "This is it!"

SPLOOEY! It was all over in two seconds. Eddie was emblazoned across the left taillight and bumper of Von Derwant's green Seville. Red and green. It reminded Von Derwant of Christmas.

It was clearly an accident. Von Derwant claimed that he couldn't see the boy, and by the time he did it was too late. His golfing partner, Hoener, was a bit confused about the whole thing, so he kept his mouth shut. No charges were pressed, and Von Derwant sent flowers.

wanted desperately to say something to him, and agonized over several different topics, deciding at last on the I Ching. She turned to him and began to explain why it fascinated her. Daddy looked at her, attempting polite interest, but when the waiter appeared with menus and wine list the conversation quickly ended. Ming looked across the table at Franz. He looked unhappy and was pulling nervously at his brass bracelet. She kicked him under the table. Franz looked up at her and smiled, then kicked her back. Ming kicked him again; he kicked her again. Lisa raised an eyebrow questioningly at Ming. Ming kicked Lisa with her other foot. Lisa kicked her back, then kicked Franz. Very quickly they were all laughing. Mother stared at the ceiling with a martyred look. Franz saw it and stopped kicking with a guilty downward glance. Franz and Lisa stopped kicking too, and the tension of the dinner returned.

"What have you been doing in school?" asked Daddy. Ming knew that he was trying to give them a graceful way to retain their dignity, but she knew that none of them had any dignity. Franz and Lisa looked to Ming, expecting her to answer her parents' question. "Well," she started, "there was a cat in Franz' bathroom again today."

"Yes," agreed Franz, nodding.

"And you met a hunchback! Remember?" Lisa put in quickly, adding, "I've never seen a hunchback."

"What a shame," said Mother, "perhaps you'll meet one in the near future."

Ming was suddenly angry. She stared for a moment at the huge topaz on Mother's finger, then stood up and said rather loudly, "What's wrong with wanting to see a hunchback?" Daddy put his hand on her shoulder and applied pressure intended to bring her back to her seat. Ming resisted for a moment then sat down hard. Several people were craning their necks to see what was going on at Ming's table. Lisa looked embarrassed but proud, and Franz smiled and laughed loudly.

"No one said anything was wrong with wanting to see a hunchback," said Daddy soothingly. "What would you kids like to eat?"

Ming said she wasn't hungry. "What about you, Lisa?" Lisa looked at Ming and stammered, "I'm not h-h-hungry either." Daddy pursed his lips and asked, "What about you, Franz?" "I'll have a butterscotch soda," said Franz decisively. Daddy looked down at the menu; Ming supposed he was hiding a smile. Is Franz so funny? What does he
think of me?

"I don't think they serve sodas here, son."

"He's not your son!" said Sog om dogmamman;

"Behave yourself, Ming," snapped Mother. Franz, Lisa and Ming finally agreed to split Chateau-Briande, since neither Ming nor Lisa was very hungry.

Just after the main course arrived Mother said, "Have you heard from Pamela or David recently?" "No," said Ming flatly. "Do you miss Andover?" Daddy asked. "No," said Ming flatly. Ming hated Andover, but she really was sorry that Pam and Prince didn't write. Franz began to speak to Lisa in Pig Latin.

"You seem to like it a lot better at Dauphin now," Daddy commented. Ming knew he was hoping she would start talking about school, and so she replied, "Yes." She picked up her water glass and took a drink from it, the brass bracelet on her left wrist clinking musically against the crystal.

"It's a shame you have to wear those awful bracelets," said Mother, straining to be heard over Franz and Lisa's conversation. "I don't know why they can't have you carry I.D. cards or something. It makes it so obvious that..." Mother stopped her speech. Sixteen going on five and a half. Jesus. Ming remembered how Mother hated to admit that there was something wrong.

Franz and Lisa's conversation was growing louder. Ming concentrated on their words for a moment, to discover the topic, then joined in. "Children," exclaimed Mother, "you are just too loud." Franz and Lisa immediately stopped talking, but Ming were right on, glancing sideways at Mother and Daddy every few minutes. She slowly increased the pitch of her voice until she was almost screaming. Mother took her by the arm and led her to the bathroom. She slowly quieted and began to swear softly, still speaking in Pig Latin. Mother didn't say anything, only sighed and patted her on the back. Ming was grateful for the silence, and stopped swearing. She stared at Mother, who was breathing deeply---obviously upset. The topaz on her right index finger was trembling. Yes, Lisa my Mother is very pretty. I know she'll like you. "Do you like Lisa and Franz, Mother?"

"They say it's the second time."

Eddie nodded again.

"Well kid, as soon as you get a little bit stronger we're gonna turn you over to juvenile court. They'll probably just send you home. But the next time something like this happens you'll be arrested and booked for attempted suicide. That's a serious offense, you know. You're lucky your parents turned you in."

Eddie laughed. He couldn't believe they had done it. Hell, it was only suicide. And shit! He'd only tried it twice! And besides that, the girl was in on it too, and his parents didn't turn her in. He would probably never see her again; such a nice girl.

His parents tried everything from extra late television hours to the family minister to get Eddie to shape up, but it was all to no avail. They decided that Eddie was destined to spend the rest of his high school years in reform school. But during his first year away they missed him so much that the following summer they decided to take him to a "special doctor" who would try to straighten things out. They brought him into the waiting room kicking and screaming. This had happened to some of his friends at school, but he knew there was nothing wrong with his head.

After ten minutes with Eddie, the doctor could see that he would get nothing out of him, so he told Eddie what he thought. "Eddie, I'd be surprised if you make it past the age of thirty in your shape, with the world so full of sharp objects. How do you manage to open a can of spaghetti?"

"My mother makes me practice," answered Eddie. The thought of kicking the bucket by age thirty had perked him up a bit. But Doctor Von Derwant was pretty fed up with this smart alec kid not responding correctly so he said, "Look Eddie, I've got to cut this one short for a golf game with Doctor Hoener, next door. How about if I see you next week?"
On the chosen day his mother cooked up a batch of spaghetti and meat sauce, Eddie's favorite meal. It was an enjoyable dinner during which Eddie's parents asked the girl how she liked school. Eddie's father was the first to excuse himself from the table and he called Eddie into the living room. He took him aside and said, "Eddie, she's a very nice girl, but I don't think you should see her anymore."

"Why not?" Eddie demanded.

"Well Eddie, she has braces! And my God, did you see those fingernails! Eddie, your Mother and I are concerned for your safety!"

Eddie ran out of the room, grabbed the girl, who was just peeling her garlic bread away from the crust, pulled her up the stairs to his room, and slammed the door. His parents threw up their arms in exasperation. They could not convince Eddie of the dangers of getting involved with a girl like that.

The next morning Eddie awoke, cold and shivering. "Hell must have frozen over," he thought. Much to his surprise, he discovered that he was in jail. There were strips of light streaming across his face from the barred windows. Eddie tried to speak, but his mouth hurt terribly. Fresh scabs covered his face, neck, arms, and back. Some of them were bandaged with old underwear that Eddie's Mother had cut up for rags. Eddie tried to get up but he was too weak. Just then someone called, "Hey Chief, the kid's awake."

"Okay, Magrane," the chief answered. Eddie could hear him sauntering down the hall towards his cell.

The Chief stood and glared at Eddie for a few minutes, but Eddie could barely move. "Say kid, that sure musta' been some helluva' fight you got yourself into! The Chief laughed at his own remark.

Eddie didn't answer. He looked at the ceiling.

"Your parents tell me that you tried to commit suicide. Is that true?"

Eddie nodded. A drop of blood ran down his chin.
HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE
Diana Yates

I exhale the blue smoke and the haze becomes a cow.
I climb on her back and ride to the moon, to the music of a single violin (my cat's first chair).
The cow and I are hungry—we eat caviar from tupperware bowls with wooden spoons
but before we finish the dishes run away. the music stops and my neighbor's chow chow chases my cat to the sun, as he runs the dog giggles.

"WHY NOT?"
Lisa Tennyson

Everyone called him Eddie Bleddy because he was a hemophiliac. But the thing that most people didn't know about Eddie was that he was a hemophiliac with suicidal tendencies. When Eddie was in first grade he got up to sharpen his pencil (quite often, as a matter of fact), and once someone stuck a thumbtack on his chair. When Eddie came to sit down the girl who sat behind him, (she felt sorry for Eddie), pointed and said, "Look, Eddie! Don't sit on that Thumbtack!"

But Eddie shouted "Why not?" as he hopped into his chair. He didn't want the teacher to yell at him for being out of his seat. As Eddie felt the thumbtack puncture his skin, he smiled in delight. The girl behind him gave a gasp of horror, but Eddie motioned for her to keep quiet. Soon, however, a pool of blood began to gather beneath Eddie's butt. The teacher, who was in the middle of demonstrating the sexual impossibility of an apples plus oranges problem (she was a spinster whose affairs one could not even count with the aid of ten fingers and ten toes), finally saw the blood, did a double take and sent her chalk screeching across the board, which was appropriate, for she was at a complete loss for words. But someone shouted, "Eddie Bleddy! Icky reddy! He's gonna' be deady!"

Eddie was rushed to the hospital, but he was the only known hemophiliac in his small Nebraska town, and the hospital did not have sufficient facilities to deal with his condition. They did the best they could, though, and sealed a Ziploc Storage Bag around his right buttock so that it would not leak. That was Eddie's first brush with death.

When he was thirteen Eddie first began to "really notice" girls. His parents encouraged him to date, since they thought maybe it would help him to "grow up" a little. So Eddie asked his parents if he could have a girl that he kind of liked over for dinner. They said, "Why sure, Eddie."
PRETENDING TO ICE FISH
Cindy Hecht

Each morning, he sits in fog
listening to the stillness
on the frozen lake. Outside
his tin shanty he sits

watching morning
open the sky
of grey. His eyes

follow his wife's path of light
into the kitchen. Yesterday

he told her the fish weren't biting.
Today, he will tell her he had one
a big one, but it got away.

RETURNING
Jim Tolley

The last I was here, snow melted into the ground
and grey mist clung to hills where leaves waited
to unfurl. In your woods, tapped maples
dripped sap that froze to sweet ice those last cold nights.
Two miles from your house, Pratt's Falls
ran white with spring runoff.

This morning, water edged over the falls and spilled
to mossy rocks at the bottom. Sumac blazed red
beneath yellowing aspen as I walked
the road through newly hayed fields, the dry ditches
on each side waiting for the wind
to fill them with frosted leaves.

And I saw you a mile away, riding the red John Deere
between bales on a new-mown slope.
I jumped the barbed-wire fence at a post tilted low,
crossed the field of cut stalks, and paused.
Over the noise of that old engine I called your name.

Now, at dusk, we ride past the white bee boxes
to the acres of goldenrod out back; the tractor lugs kick
insects into the air. From the high curved fender
I trace the course of a stream down to the edge
of the darkening woods, and wonder

at the high red clouds passing quickly
above us. Following the old stone fence north,
the last dust of Autumn is in our eyes; the goldenrod
stands bright around us as we ride the tractor
up the hill, to the house.
FOG

Tina Ament

Late at night fog
seeps through cracks
of memory, drowning
all sound.

I hear only the waves
that crash inside me
over seawalls of bone.

They are the breakers that steered
boats in December storms, spitting spray
up to the windows
of the lighthouse.

As swells recede, they tug
at my mind like an anchor.
Fog surrounds my skin. I feel
its wet touch on my face.
Somewhere stars swim
dimmed by gray.

Light gone, I thrash
avoiding rocks, finally sinking
through breathes of sea.
I twist
but the water will not move in my wake.

MORNING

Judi Shulevitz

You wake
and reach for me
your hands touching
my wrist
no one has followed
the path of my blood
this way

The sun sliding over the window-
sill warms the room
leaves tremble water
onto the glass

Your fingers swim
about my waist. I
almost fear these currents
careening around rocks, white
water. I watch
the windows disappear
into light.
IN SLEEP

Karen Baum

Beneath my ear
a thousand small birds
sigh. Waves
drift like feathers over the sand.
Above the reeds, gulls rise,
circle the sleeping moon,
their wings slowly beating as a man
walks by the water. His face, pale
like clouds at evening, looks up
through the dark. He listens
for the birds that dive
each night into the sea, waits for the stars
to fade before he swims away
from the shore.
CREE CALL

for louis

Lisa Shirley

He calls the red sun
from bad lands baked dry
by years without rain.

His tongue, thirst-stiffened, clings
in his throat like a desert
rat. Within his body
thin strips of blood pulse
heat.

And he sees, past the bright
clouds, past his hunger so deep
it burns

burning rock
the shadows

of birds twisting
black
against morning.
THE RED WHEELBARROW

EDITOR
JAY FROST

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Dear Jeff

It was great working with you this year. I had a lot of fun with them this year from table driving with the animals. I enjoyed seeing you this summer. I enjoyed seeing you this summer. Next year? !! Take care this wheel.

Love, Lynda

always